

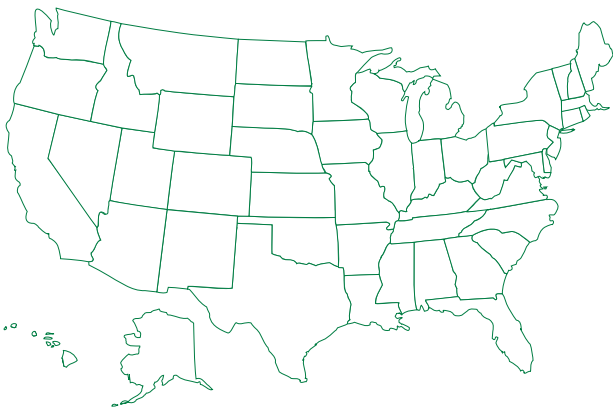


AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Stress in America™

Mind/Body Health: For a Healthy Mind and Body, Talk to a Psychologist

STRESS AND REGION



When it comes to stress levels and how Americans manage them, where they live appears to make a difference. Regional differences* exist in terms of how Americans rate their stress, the types of healthy — and unhealthy — behaviors they turn to in order to cope with stress and their willingness to enlist the help of psychologists.

The latest *Stress in America*™ survey results indicate that Americans living on the East Coast report the most stress. Findings also suggest those on the East Coast may be the least able to manage their stress. Midwesterners report they are feeling increasingly stressed but more likely to value help from a psychologist, Southerners do fairly well at managing their stress and Westerners report being among the healthiest and least likely to have physical manifestations of stress.

American Stress

Most Americans (about two-thirds, across regions) are satisfied overall with their lives and feel they are doing a fair job managing their stress. But some report better progress in this area than others.

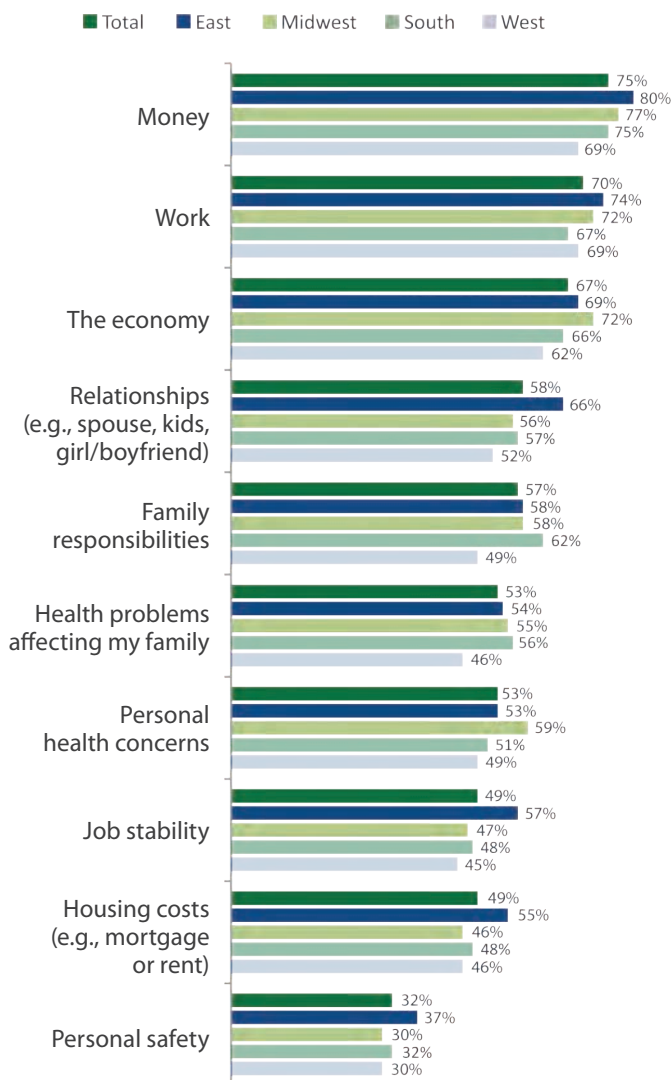
- Most regions are doing the same at managing stress this year compared to previous years, with the exception of the West, where more people this year report that they are doing an excellent/very good job managing stress (35 percent 2011 vs. 24 percent 2010).
- Money, work and the economy top the list of stressors across all four regions but there are some differences. Adults in the East are more likely than those in the West to name money (80 percent vs. 69 percent), relationships (66 percent vs. 52 percent) and job stability (57 percent vs. 45 percent) as causes of stress. And those in the South are more likely than those in the West to name family responsibilities (62 percent vs. 49 percent).



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Easterners are the least likely to say they have little or no stress.

Causes of Stress By Region
(% Somewhat/Very Significant)



BASE: All respondents (n=1226); East (n=299); Midwest (n=259); South (n=389); West (n=279)
Q625 Below is a list of things people say cause stress in their lives. For each one, please indicate how significant a source of stress it is in your life.

- Residents in the West are more likely than those in the East and South to spend time with friends or family to help manage stress (49 percent vs. 28 percent and 36 percent). Those in the Midwest and South are more likely than those in the West to pray (35 percent and 38 percent vs. 24 percent), while more residents in the East than in the West drink alcohol (17 percent vs. 11 percent). Furthermore, Easterners are more likely than those in the Midwest to meditate or do yoga (15 percent vs. 6 percent).

East Coast Stress

Adults living in the East tend to be slightly more stressed and less able to manage it than those in the rest of the United States, according to the survey results. Easterners are among the most likely to believe their stress increased in recent years, and this year unhealthy behaviors due to stress rose while frequency of exercise declined.

- Easterners report slightly higher levels of stress (5.4 on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is little or no stress and 10 is a great deal of stress) than Americans in other regions (5.2 in the Midwest, 5.0 in the South and 5.1 in the West), and Easterners are the least likely to say they have little or no stress (31 percent in the Midwest, 35 percent in the South and 33 percent in the West vs. 24 percent in the East).
- Residents of the East are more likely than those in the South to say that their stress has increased over the past 5 years (49 percent vs. 39 percent). A growing number of Easterners say their stress has increased over the past year (44 percent in 2011 vs. 39 percent in 2010).

Although a high percentage of people living in the East say that they are in good (43 percent), very good (34 percent) or excellent (5 percent) health, their diet and exercise habits point to the contrary. In general, unhealthy consequences of stress are up this year among adults in the East and

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frequency of exercise is down. They also indicate that they are more likely than the other regions to eat healthy foods rarely or never.

- Half of Easterners (50 percent, up from 40 percent last year) say they have lain awake at night in the past month due to stress, 38 percent (up from 33 percent in 2010) have overeaten or eaten unhealthy foods and 36 percent (up from 28 percent in 2010) have skipped a meal.
- Approximately 1 in 10 adults (12 percent) in the East say they eat healthy rarely or never compared to 6 percent nationwide, 6 percent in the South, 3 percent in the Midwest and 2 percent in the West.

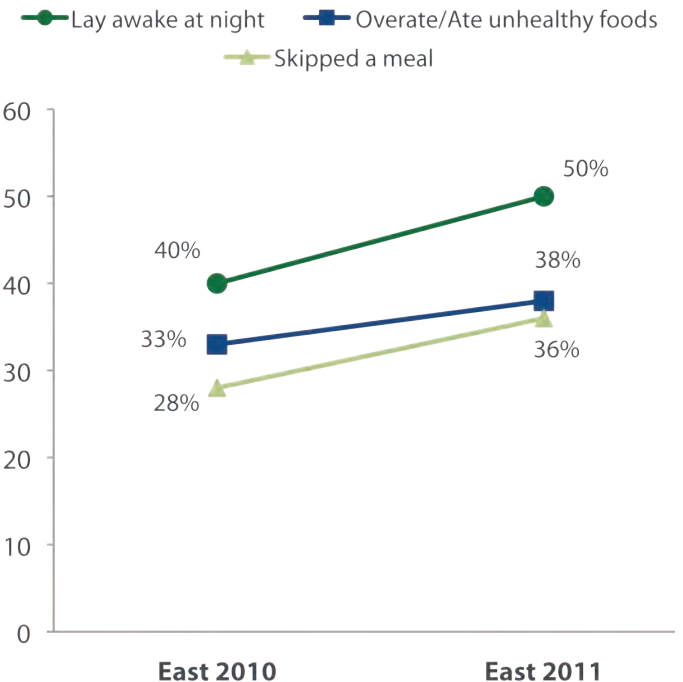
Vigorous exercise is down dramatically in the East this year; It dropped from 20 percent last year to 12 percent this year. In addition, those in the East are the least likely to report that they engage in vigorous physical activity that makes them sweat and breathe hard at least once a day. Only 12 percent of those in the East report that they engage in vigorous physical activity daily compared with 24 percent of adults in the West, 19 percent in the South, and 15 percent in the Midwest.

Compared to Americans elsewhere, Easterners are more likely to say they are too busy and too stressed to make positive changes in their lives.

- When it comes to making behavior or lifestyle changes, adults in the East and Midwest are among the most likely (16 percent each) to name being too stressed as a barrier to making desired or recommended lifestyle changes (compared to 7 percent in the West and 11 percent in the South).
- Easterners are most likely to say they don't have time to make changes (30 percent, compared to 26 percent for the Midwest and South and 23 percent for Westerners).

Compared to Americans elsewhere, Easterners are more likely to say they are too busy and too stressed to make positive changes in their lives.

Unhealthy Behaviors Due to Stress in the East (Experienced in Past Month Due to Stress)



BASE: All respondents East 2010 (n=274); East 2011 (n=299)

Q770 During the last month, did you ever lay awake at night because you were feeling stressed?

Q785 During the last month, did you ever eat too much or eat unhealthy foods because you were feeling stressed?

Q800 During the last month, did you ever skip a meal because you were under stress?

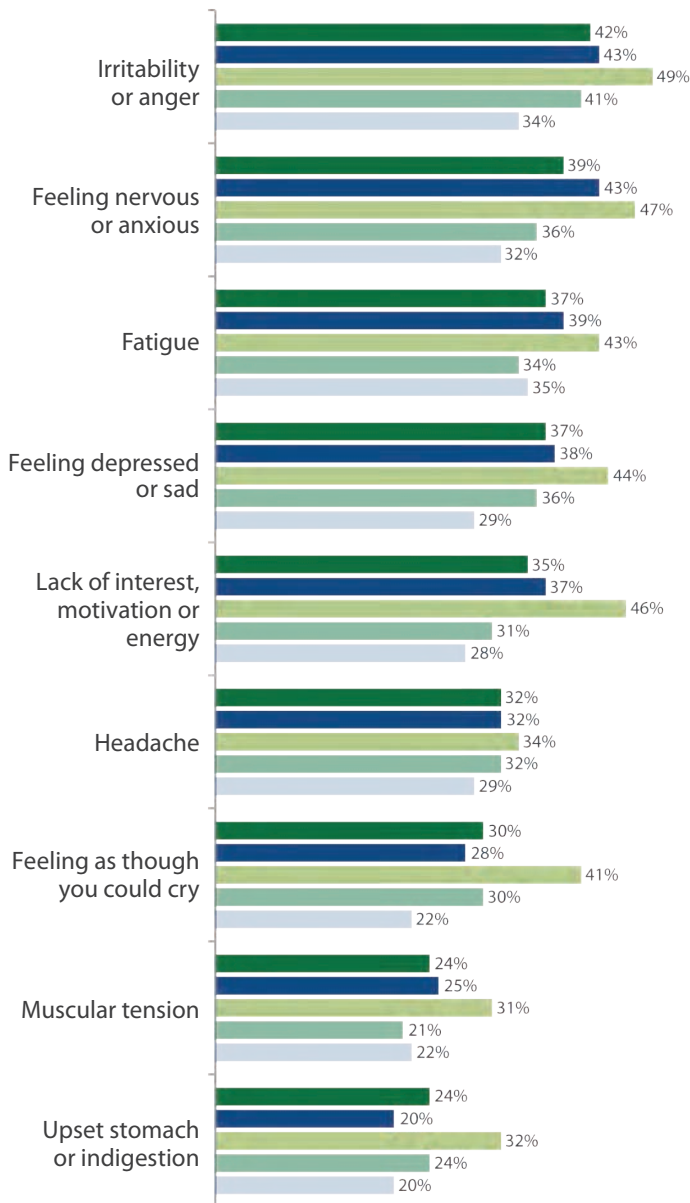


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Physical Symptoms of Stress By Region

Which of the following, if any, have you experienced in the last month as a result of stress?

■ Total ■ East ■ Midwest ■ South ■ West



BASE: All respondents (n=1226); East (n=299); Midwest (n=259); South (n=389); West (n=279)
Q810 Which of the following, if any, have you experienced in the last month as a result of stress?

- They are, however, more inclined than Westerners to recognize the link between their stress and their physical health (40 percent vs. 30 percent) and mental health (40 percent vs. 28 percent).

Midwestern Stress

Adults in the Midwest are more likely to say that stress has increased over the past year and they are also more likely to name various physical and non-physical ways that stress manifests itself.

- A larger proportion of Midwesterners are reporting increased stress this year than last (46 percent say their stress has increased in 2011, compared to 39 percent in 2010).
- They are also the most likely region to cite a wide variety of both physical and non-physical symptoms of stress. Up to roughly half (more than any other region in each case) of Midwesterners list irritability (49 percent); nervousness (47 percent); having a lack of interest, motivation or energy (46 percent); feeling depressed or sad (44 percent); fatigue (43 percent); feeling overwhelmed (43 percent); and feeling as though they could cry (41 percent).

The occurrence of some health conditions is highest in the Midwest compared to other parts of the country and, this year, more people in the Midwest say their family does not try to be active.

- Compared to people in other regions, Midwesterners were most likely to report high cholesterol (30 percent), type 2 diabetes (14 percent), arthritis (20 percent), depression (19 percent) and anxiety disorders (14 percent).
- There was a slight uptick this year among people in the Midwest who say that their family does not try to be active at all (16 percent, up from 11 percent in 2010). Also, across

regions, Midwesterners are the most likely group, and significantly more likely than Southerners, to say that their family does not try to be active (16 percent vs. 11 percent in the East, 9 percent in the West and 7 percent in the South).

- Residents of the Midwest (44 percent) are more likely than those in other regions (35 percent in the East and 41 percent in the South) to believe that a psychologist can help manage stress a great deal or a lot. Westerners were equally as likely to believe in a psychologist's ability to help.

Southern Stress

Adults in the South have a solid understanding of how stress can impact health, and they appear to be doing relatively well at managing their own stress.

- Nine in 10 adults in the South (89 percent) say that stress can have a very strong/strong impact on a person's health, compared to 81 percent in the Midwest, 81 percent in the West and 80 percent in the East.
- While the differential is still substantial, the South has the smallest gap between importance of stress management (60 percent) and achievement in managing stress (42 percent). They are also the most likely to say that stress has decreased over the past 5 years (32 percent, compared to 26 percent in the East, 21 percent in the Midwest and 27 percent in the West).

Emotions play a slightly more significant role in the South compared to other regions of the country when it comes to willpower and stress management.

- Those living in the South are more likely than residents of other regions to say that they lack willpower because their emotions interfere (28 percent, compared to 17 percent in the Midwest, 20 percent in the East and 21 percent in the West).

Emotions play a slightly more significant role in the South compared to other regions of the country when it comes to willpower and stress management.



STRESS BY REGION

A greater number of residents in the South and West say they are in excellent health compared to the East and Midwest.

- Further, when it comes to stress management techniques, they are the most likely to say that they manage stress by expressing their feelings rather than bottling them up (42 percent) and by focusing on the positive (58 percent).

Stress may be impacting their own health more than they realize.

- Two in 5 adults in the South (43 percent) say they are too tired to exercise and nearly one-third (30 percent) say that the convenience of unhealthy food is a barrier preventing them from eating healthy foods more often.

Western Stress

Westerners report that they are among the healthiest in the nation, believe they are doing an excellent job managing their stress and work hard to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

- Three-fourths (75 percent) of Westerners say they are satisfied with their health, more than any other region.
- A greater number of residents in the South and West say they are in excellent health compared to the East and Midwest (11 percent in the South and West vs. 5 percent in the East and 7 percent in the Midwest).

This may be attributable, at least in part, to survey findings that suggest Westerners exercise and eat healthy foods with a higher than average frequency.

- At least once a day, almost one-quarter (24 percent) of adults in the West engage in physical activity that makes them sweat and breathe hard. This is significantly higher than adults living in the East (12 percent), the Midwest (15 percent) and the South (19 percent).
- Though the main reason in all four regions for engaging in physical activity is to help manage weight, adults in the

West are more likely than those in the Midwest and South to do so because it makes them feel happy (42 percent vs. 27 percent and 29 percent, respectively) and are more likely than those in the Midwest to say it keeps them from getting sick (28 percent vs. 17 percent).

- Westerners are most likely to report that they “always” eat healthy foods (7 percent vs. 5 percent for the East and South and 3 percent for the Midwest) and more likely (23 percent) to say they “almost always” eat healthy than those in the East and Midwest (18 percent each).

Staying physically healthy may affect Westerners’ ability to successfully manage stress.

- They are most likely (34 percent) to say stress has little or no impact on their physical health (32 percent in the South, 30 percent in the Midwest and 24 percent in the East) and mental health (42 percent vs. 36 percent in the South, 37 percent in the Midwest and 29 percent in the East).
- They are the least likely to report their own health problems (49 percent) or those of a family member (46 percent) as a source of stress.
- Across the board, Westerners report some of the lowest levels of physical symptoms due to stress, such as irritability (34 percent), headaches (29 percent), depression (29 percent) or a change in sex drive (8 percent), though they do tend to report grinding their teeth more (18 percent) than people in any other region.

Westerners are also better at maintaining a positive attitude and avoiding stress-related unhealthy behaviors than people living in other regions of the country.

- Similar to the South, a majority focuses on the positive (53 percent) to help them manage stress.

Westerners report some of the lowest levels of physical symptoms due to stress, such as irritability, headaches, depression or a change in sex drive.



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Similar to Southerners, a majority of Westerners focus on the positive to help them manage stress.

- An increasing number of Westerners report they are doing an excellent/very good job of managing their stress this year, compared to last (35 percent compared to 24 percent).
- Westerners are less likely to engage in some unhealthy behaviors due to stress this year than they were last year (50 percent lay awake at night due to stress in 2010, down to 39 percent in 2011; 37 percent ate unhealthy foods, down to 34 percent in 2011; and 35 percent skipped a meal in 2010, down to 26 percent in 2011).
- Similar to those residing in the Midwest, people in the West are more likely to recognize that a psychologist can help manage stress (44 percent) than those in the East and South.